CLAIMS:

1. A medical device programmer comprising:

an infrared interface to receive changes to software executed by a processor within the programmer during an infrared communication session; and

a controller to control the infrared interface to initiate an infrared communication session for a period of time following power-up of the programmer.

2. The programmer of claim 1, wherein the infrared interface is active for approximately 5 to 10 seconds following power-up to seek a communication session.

3. The programmer of claim 1, wherein the software changes comprise changes to an operating system of the programmer

4. The programmer of claim 1, wherein the software changes comprise changes to medical device programs.

5. The programmer of claim 1, further comprising a processor to execute instructions specified by the software changes.

6. The programmer of claim 1, further comprising a software loading port for loading the software upon assembly of the programmer.

7. The programmer of claim 6, wherein the software loading port includes a JTAG interface.

8. The programmer of claim 6, further comprising a plate member placed to cover the loading port.

9. The programmer of claim 8, wherein the plate member is printed with identifying information.

10.   The programmer of claim 1, wherein the software includes instructions to implement an embedded operating system within the programmer.

11.   The programmer of claim 1, further comprising:

a first circuit board within the programmer housing, the first circuit board including telemetry circuitry, wherein the telemetry circuit is coupled to an antenna; and

a second circuit board within the programmer housing, the second circuit board including a display and display circuitry.

12.   The programmer of claim 10, wherein the second circuit board includes control circuitry to control the display and the telemetry circuit, the programmer further comprising an electrical interface between the first and second circuit boards.

13.   The programmer of claim 11 wherein the control circuit disables the display and the display circuitry during telemetry.

14.   The programmer of claim 10, further comprising an internal antenna mounted to the first circuit board on a side of the first circuit board opposite the second circuit board.

15.   The programmer of claim 13, wherein the internal antenna defines an aperture, the programmer further comprising a battery bay extending at least partially into the aperture.

16.   The programmer of claim 10, further comprising an external antenna coupled to the telemetry circuitry via a cable.

17.   The programmer of claim 10, wherein the display is a liquid crystal display.

18.   The programmer of claim 1, wherein the infrared interface is positioned on a lower side surface of a housing associated with the programmer.

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19.   The programmer of claim 1, wherein the infrared interface is an Infrared Data Association (IRDA) interface.